

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 IO-15 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 JUSE-00 NSAE-00

RSC-01 SNM-02 SY-10 TRSE-00 USIA-15 NSC-10 SCI-06

OMB-01 SS-15 L-03 AID-20 DODE-00 H-03 DRC-01 /127 W

----- 000768

R 031025Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7138

INFO AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USMISSION GENEVA

DEA HQS WASHDC

S E C R E T BANGKOK 15496

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, TH

SUBJECT: NARCOTICS: QUARTERLY ROUNDUP OF THAI DEVELOPMENTS

SUMMARY: RG ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS FROM JULY 1 TO SEPTEMBER 30 HAVE RESULTED IN IMPORTANT NARCOTICS SEIZURES AND ARRESTS OF LEADING TRAFFICKERS. THESE SEIZURES AND ARRESTS HAVE DISRUPTED BUT NOT HALTED THE MOVEMENT OF NARCOTICS INTO THAILAND VIA CARAVAN AND OUT OF THAILAND VIA TRAWLER. THE UN CROP SUBSTITUTION PROGRAM IS PROCEEDING SATISFACTORILY, BUT MUCH MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE TO END OPIUM PRODUCTION AND PROVIDE ALTERNATE SOURCES OF INCOME FOR OPIUM GROWERS. END SUMMARY.

1. SEIZURES. IMPORTANT THAI POLICE NARCOTICS SEIZURES SINCE JULY 1 INCLUDE: 2520 KILOGRAMS OF RAW OPIUM CONCEALED IN AN ISLAND CAVE OFF CHUMPHON IN SOUTHERN THAILAND JULY 21, 18 KILOGRAMS OF #4 HEROIN CONCEALED IN A TRUCK JULY 19, 80 KILOS OF MORPHINE BASE IN CHUMPHON PROVINCE AUGUST 22, 136 KILOS OF MORPHINE BASE FROM A CAR STOPPED IN CHIANG MAI PROVINCE AUGUST 24, AND 3500 KILOS OF RAW OPIUM FOUND IN A STREAM BED IN NORTHERN CHIANG MAI PROVINCE AUGUST 26. IN ALL
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THAI POLICE SEIZED MORE THAN SIX METRIC TONS OF OPIUM, 225 KILOGRAMS OF MORPHINE BASE, AND 22 KILOGRAMS OF #4 HEROIN FROM JULY 1 TO SEPTEMBER 30. WE ARE SENDING A MORE DETAILED LIST OF SEIZURES DURING THIS PERIOD VIA AIRGRAM.

2. ARRESTS. THE THAI BORDER PATROL POLICE (BPP) CAPTURED LO HSING-HAN, REPUTED NARCOTICS KING OF THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE, IN MAE HONG SON PROVINCE JULY 17. THE RTG RELEASED LO TO BURMESE AUTHORITIES AUGUST 2 FOR PROSECUTION. LO'S CAPTURE FOLLOWED CLOSELY THE ARREST OF LU PENG KHIA AND TWO OF HIS CLOSE ASSOCIATES. LU IS A MAJOR FINANCIER OF NARCOTICS SHIPMENTS VIA TRAWLER FROM THAILAND TO HONG KONG. LU AND HIS ASSOCIATES AWAIT DISPOSITION UNDER ARTICLE 17 (A NON-JUDICIAL PROCEEDING) OF THE INTERIM CONSTITUTION.

3. TRAWLERS. THE JULY 10 ARREST OF LU PENG KHIA HAS DISRUPTED THE MOVEMENT OF NARCOTICS FROM THAILAND VIA TRAWLER. CREW MEMBERS WHO FORMERLY WERE PAID AFTER DELIVERY OF THE NARCOTICS ARE NOW DEMANDING PAY IN ADVANCE, AND FINANCIERS ARE WEIGHING THE RISKS OF NARCOTICS SHIPMENTS MORE CAREFULLY. ACCORDING TO HONG KONG POLICE, NO THAI TRAWLER DELIVERED NARCOTICS TO HONG KONG DURING JULY OR AUGUST. THE HONG KONG NARCOTICS BUREAU BELIEVES A THAI TRAWLER SUCCESSFULLY DELIVERED A LOAD OF OPIUM AND MORPHINE IN EARLY SEPTEMBER, AND A LOAD OF 1.6 TONS OF PREPARED OPIUM REPORTEDLY ARRIVED IN SINGAPORE VIA THAI TRAWLER IN MID-SEPTEMBER. ALTHOUGH THAI POLICE HAVE NOT YET SEIZED A TRAWLER THEMSELVES, THEY CAPTURED 2520 KILOS OF OPIUM AND 80 KILOS OF MORPHINE BASE IN SOUTHERN THAILAND JULY 21 AND AUGUST 22, RESPECTIVELY. THESE NARCOTICS WERE DESTINED FOR SHIPMENT BY TRAWLER TO HONG KONG.

4. CARAVANS. FOLLOWING THE INITIAL BORDER PATROL POLICE CAPTURE OF A CARAVAN JUNE 20, THAI POLICE HAVE CONTINUED THEIR ATTEMPTS TO SEIZE NARCOTICS CARAVANS ENTERING THAILAND FROM BURMA. BPP FORCES INTERCEPTED A SUSPECTED NARCOTICS CARAVAN ENTERING CHIANG RAI PROVINCE AUGUST 8, BUT FOUND ONLY 84 BAGS OF UNCUT JADE VALUED AT US \$500,000. THE AUGUST 26 SEIZURE OF 3500 KILOS OF OPIUM IN NORTHERN CHIANG MAI PROVINCE RESULTED FROM THAI POLICE EFFORTS TO CAPTURE A KACHIN INDEPENDENCE ARMY (KIA) CARAVAN WHICH HID THE OPIUM AND FLED. AS A RESULT OF THAI ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS, WE EXPECT MORE CARAVANS TO CARRY OTHER MERCHANDISE, SUCH AS PRECIOUS STONES, INSTEAD OF NARCOTICS.

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5. NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION CENTER. THE THAI POLICE NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION CENTER, WHICH IS CHARGED WITH COORDINATING NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION ACTIVITIES BY ALL THAI POLICE ELEMENTS, IS NOW FUNCTIONING. THE CENTER OPERATES UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF POLICE MAJOR GENERAL POW SARASIN WHOSE APPOINTMENT AS SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE CENTRAL NARCOTICS BUREAU WAS ANNOUNCED JULY 5. THE CENTER IS WORKING TO DRAW HIGHWAY POLICE AND MARITIME POLICE INTO A MORE ACTIVE NARCOTICS ROLE.

6. CODEL WOLFF. THE VISIT OF CODEL WOLFF TO THAILAND AUGUST 12-17 GAVE CONGRESSMAN WOLFF THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET THAI POLICE OFFICIALS AND TO SEE FIRSTHAND THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROBLEMS. ALTHOUGH CONGRESSMAN WOLFF CONTINUES TO BELIEVE THAT MUCH MORE SHOULD BE DONE,

PARTICULARLY IN TAKING OPIUM OUT OF CULTIVATION IN THAILAND, HE HAS MUTED SOMEWHAT HIS EARLIER CRITICISM OF RTG ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORTS AS A RESULT OF HIS VISIT.

7. RELATIONS WITH BURMA. THE DEPARTURE OF U NU FROM THAILAND HAS OPENED THE WAY TO IMPROVED RTG/GUB RELATIONS, WHICH HAS FAVORABLE POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION EFFORTS. THE CAPTURE OF LO HSING-HAN AND HIS SUBSEQUENT DEPORTATION TO BURMA ARE THE FIRST SIGNIFICANT ACTS OF RTG/GUB COOPERATION AGAINST NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS. THE FIRST MEETING OF THE THAI-BURMESE JOINT BORDER COMMITTEE IN TEN YEARS SUBSEQUENTLY TOOK PLACE IN RANGOON IN AUGUST, AND NARCOTICS WAS REPORTEDLY AMONG THE SUBJECTS DISCUSSED.

8. UNFEDAC/THAI PROJECT. THE UNITED NATIONS FUND FOR DRUG ABUSE CONTROL (UNFEDAC) CROP SUBSTITUTION PROJECT IN NORTHERN THAILAND IS PLANTING 30 TONS OF KIDNEY BEAN SEED IN THE 30 VILLAGES UNDER THE PROJECT AND AN ADDITIONAL 15 VILLAGES UNDER THE KING'S HILL TRIBE PROJECT. THE PLANTING OF THESE BEANS IS EXPECTED TO TAKE 1000 TO 1500 RAI OF LAND OUT OF OPIUM PRODUCTION. UNFEDAC HEADQUARTERS IN GENEVA HAS AGREED TO SUBSIDIZE THE PURCHASE AND RESELLING OF THE BEANS GROWN BY THE 45 VILLAGES. UNFEDAC AND THE RTG SIGNED A WORK PLAN FOR AN ADDICT TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION PROJECT JUNE 14 AND EXPERIMENTAL PILOT PROJECTS ARE EXPECTED TO BEGIN SOON.

9. USG PROGRAMS. THE DEPARTMENT HAS NOW AUTHORIZED US TO DISCUSS WITH THE RTG A PACKAGE OF PROJECTS TO PROVIDE ALTERNATIVE INCOMES TO THE OPIUM GROWING HILL TRIBES. THESE PROPOSALS ARE DESIGNED TO SUPPLEMENT AND COMPLEMENT THE UNFEDAC CROP SUBSTITUTION PROJECT.

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THE DEPARTMENT HAS ALSO APPROVED IN PRINCIPLE OUR REQUEST FOR FOUR ADDITIONAL HELICOPTERS FOR THE THAI NATIONAL POLICE DEPARTMENT (TNPd). THESE HELICOPTERS, WHEN FINALLY APPROVED AND DELIVERED, WILL GIVE US GREATER LEVERAGE WITH THE RTG ON NARCOTICS MATTERS AND WILL IMPROVE THE TNPd ABILITY TO INTERDICT CARAVANS AND TRAWLERS.

10. CONTINUING PROBLEMS.

A. ALTHOUGH PROGRESS IN RTG NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT IS CONTINUING, THAI POLICE STILL DO NOT HAVE THE MANPOWER OR EQUIPMENT IN THE FAR NORTH TO MAINTAIN A CONSISTENT ENFORCEMENT PRESENCE AGAINST THE CARAVANS WHICH TRANSIT THIS AREA. THAI POLICE ALSO REQUIRE GREATER MOBILITY FOR RAIDS AGAINST BOTH CARAVANS IN THE NORTH AND TRAWLERS IN THE GULF OF SIAM.

B. HOWEVER SUCCESSFUL, ENFORCEMENT IS ONLY A TEMPORARY SOLUTION TO THE NARCOTICS PROBLEM IN THAILAND UNTIL THE PRODUCTION OF OPIUM IN THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE CAN BE ENDED. THE UNFEDAC/THAI PROJECT IS GOOD, BUT LIMITED. THE INCOME SUBSTITUTION PROJECTS WHICH WE NOW ARE DISCUSSING WITH THE RTG ARE AIMED AT ENDING OPIUM GROWING IN THAILAND, BUT THE PROBLEM OF PRODUCTION IN BURMA IS MORE DIFFICULT TO SOLVE, AND CONTINUED RTG ENFORCEMENT IS REQUIRED TO PREVENT THE TRANSSHIP-

MENT OF BURMESE OPIUM THROUGH THAILAND.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 11 MAY 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DRUG CONTROL, DRUG TRAFFIC, NARCOTICS, DRUG SEIZURES, ARRESTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 OCT 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: worrelsw
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973BANGKO15496
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731065/abqcefln.tel
Line Count: 167
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: worrelsw
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: WITHDRAWN <25-Jul-2001 by smithrj, REFER TO DEA>; RELEASED <08-Aug-2001 by worrelsw>; APPROVED <09-Aug-2001 by worrelsw>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NARCOTICS: QUARTERLY ROUNDUP OF THAI DEVELOPMENTS
TAGS: SNAR, TH
To: STATE INFO RANGOON
VIENTIANE
CHIANG MAI
HONG KONG
GENEVA
DEA HQS

Type: TE

Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005